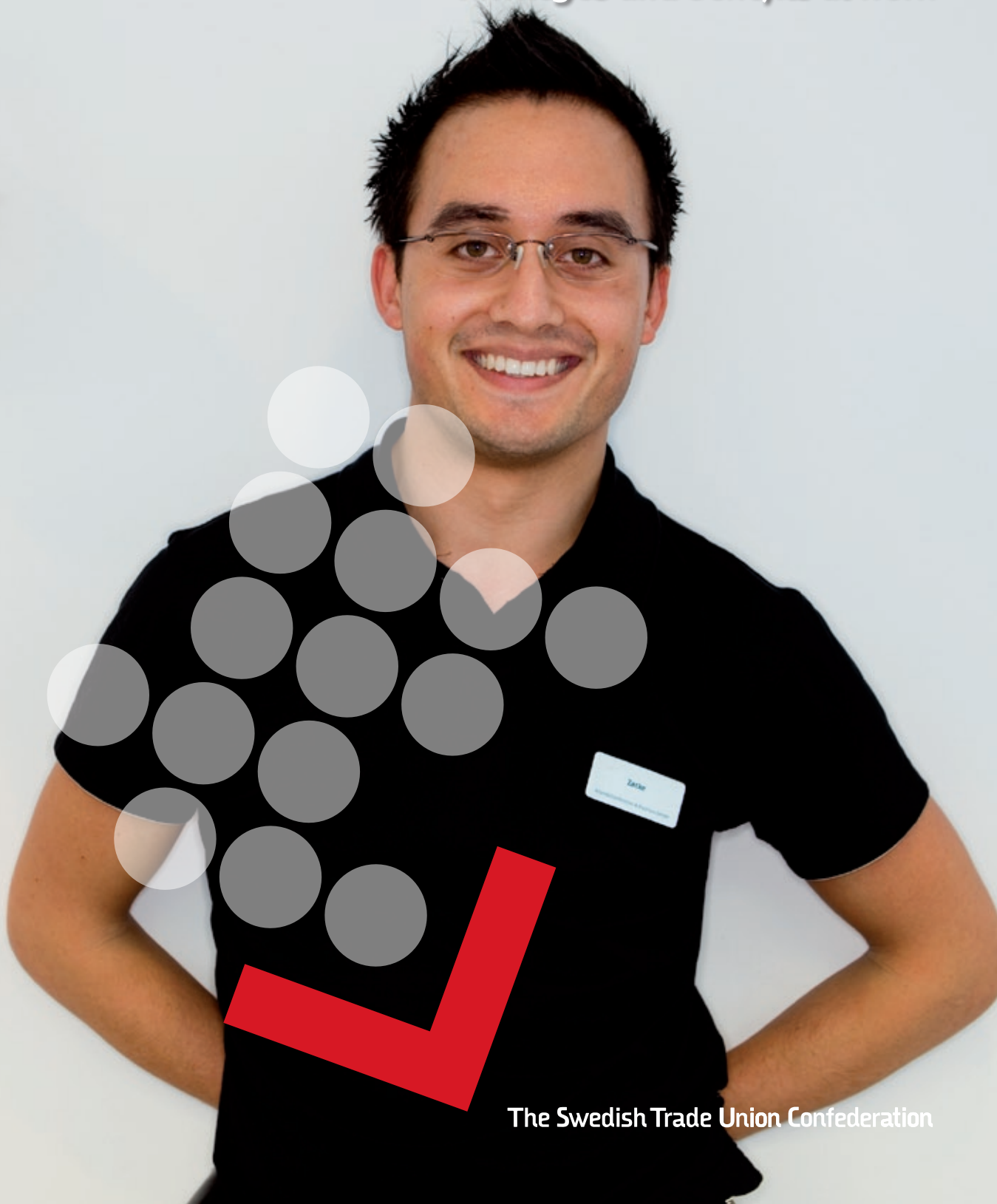




Opinions on unions and work

Privileges and benefits at work



© The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) 2007

Cover photo: Lars Forsstedt

Graphic design: MacGunnar – Information & Media

Print: Modintryckoffset, Stockholm 2007

ISBN 91-566-2392-5

LO 07.12 500

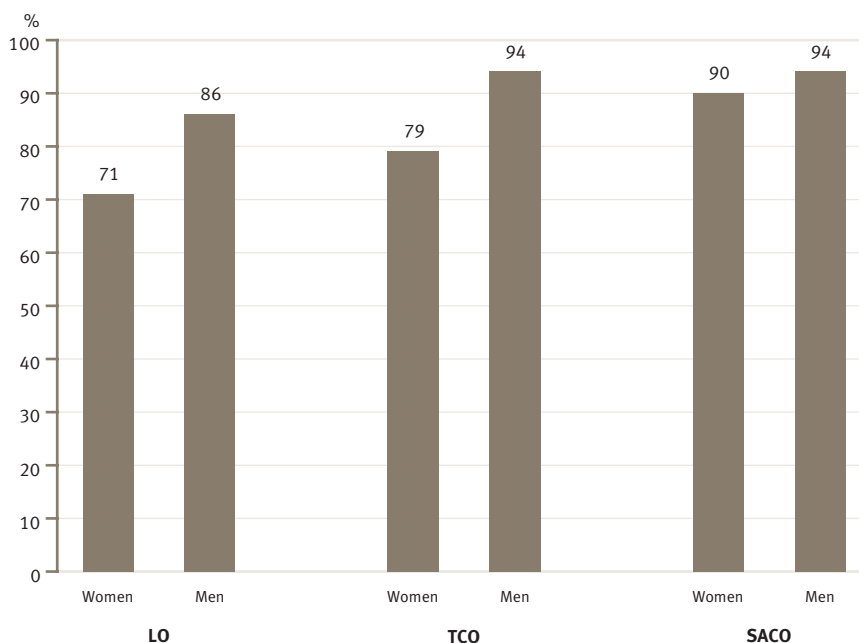
Summary of the fourth report

Class, gender and wage are quite crucial concerning what kind of privileges and benefits there are for the employees at work.

LO, April 2007
Mats Larsson
Anna Fransson
Ingela Goding
Åsa Forssell

Diagram 2.1 Have the possibility to leave workplace for five minutes

Per cent



Privileges and benefits at work

In addition to their wages employed persons may receive other kinds of benefits at work. These may include everything from free coffee to a free car and being able to plan the content of your work and your working hours for yourself. The fourth in the series of reports “Voices from the trade union and the workplace” deals with this issue of benefits. Two questions are asked. The first involves the privilege of being able to exert your own influence and plan your tasks in the workplace and your working hours. The other question deals with different benefits linked to terms of employment or the workplace.

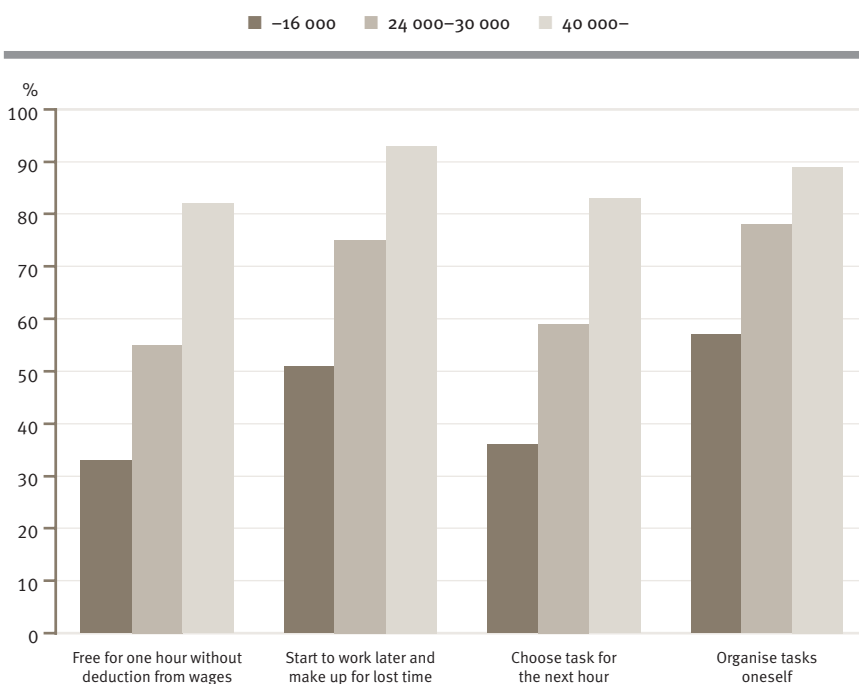
The purpose of the report is not to map all forms of privileges and benefits, but above all to determine whether certain groups of employees have more or fewer privileges and benefits than other groups.

Privileges

Privileges at work involve the privilege at the workplace of being able to influence and plan your tasks and your working hours yourself. These may involve both minor and major benefits. Most people already enjoy minor privileges such as being able to make a phone call during working hours or leave work for a short time. However more important privileges, such as flexible working hours being able to set the priority for various tasks oneself, are much more frequent among TCO and SACO members than for LO-members.

Diagram 2.12 More extensive privileges related to earnings per month

All employees. Per cent



There is also a distinct difference between men and women and LO women belong to the group that has the fewest different privileges. However there is just as obvious a link between how much people earn and the privileges they enjoy at work.

Minor privileges

Where minor privileges are concerned, most employees can take a break of 5 minutes without asking for permission. This privilege is enjoyed by 79 per cent of the LO members, 84 per cent of the TCO members and 92 per cent of the SACO members. Divided according to both class and gender, LO women constitute the group with the lowest proportion able to take a break of five minutes. Only 71 per cent of LO women have this privilege compared to 94 per cent of the TCO-men and the SACO men (see graph 2.1).

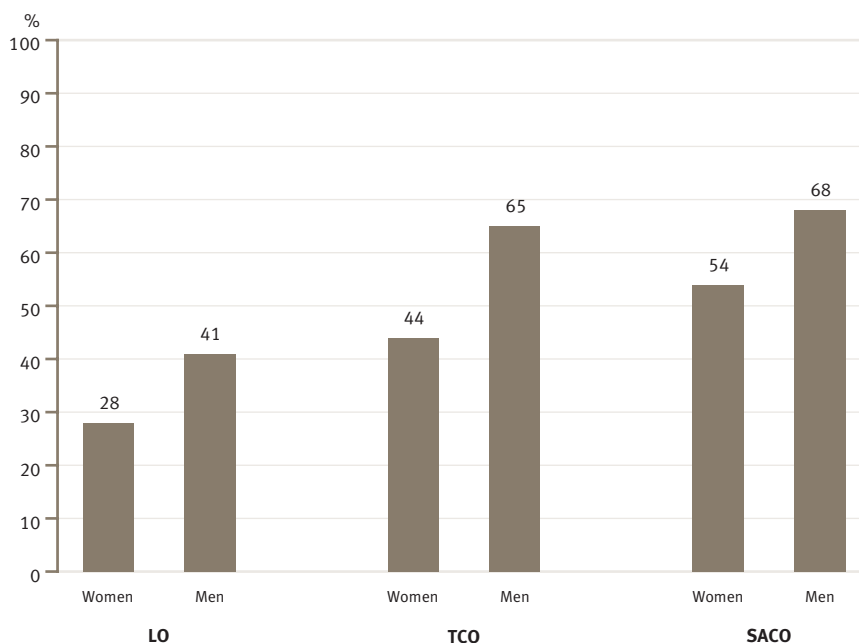
Almost everyone is allowed to receive or make a phone call during working hours. Only 4 per cent of the LO members do not have this privilege.

Major privileges – mostly for high-income earners

Major privileges, such as being able to take an hour off, start work later or choose what to do for the next hour, are considerably more frequent among high-income earners than people with low wages. For instance among those earning more than SEK 40,000 SEK per month 83 per cent are able to decide themselves what to do during the next hour while this applies to only 36 per cent of those earning up to SEK 16,000 SEK (see graph 2.12.)

Diagram 2.5 Possibility to do errands during paid working hours

Per cent



This is also reflected in the different privileges for employees of different classes and gender. Only 28 per cent of LO women and 41 per cent of LO men were able to take one hour off work without a salary deduction, while more than 65 per cent of the men within both TCO and SACO were able to do so, although this applied to only 44 and 54 per cent of TCO and SACO women respectively (see graph 2.5).

Many are able to start work later sometimes and subsequently make up for lost time. This privilege is enjoyed mainly by TCO and SACO members, 72 and 82 per cent respectively but also by 57 per cent of the LO members. Here again there is a major difference between women and men, 63 per cent of LO-men have this privilege, but only 51 per cent of the LO women (see graph 2.7).

A relatively large number, about 60 per cent, of LO members were able to schedule their holidays themselves, and the same applied for members of TCO.

Workplace benefits

The other issue studied in the report concerns benefits linked to actual terms of employment or to the workplace. These could involve major and minor benefits such as free coffee, a leased car or profit sharing.

Minor benefits

There has been a relatively large increase in minor benefits in the form of

Diagram 2.7 Start work a little later one day and make up for lost time

Per cent

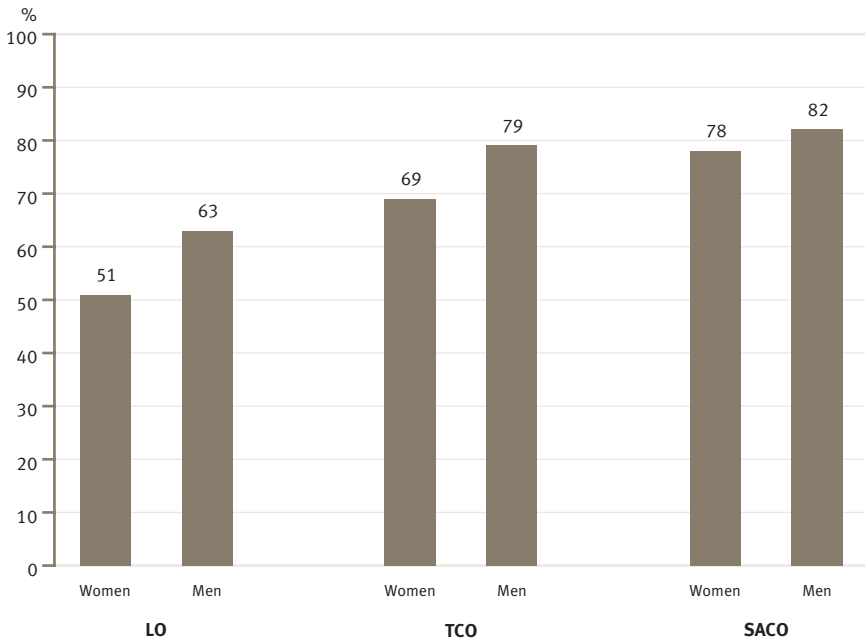


Diagram 3.1 Free coffee

Per cent

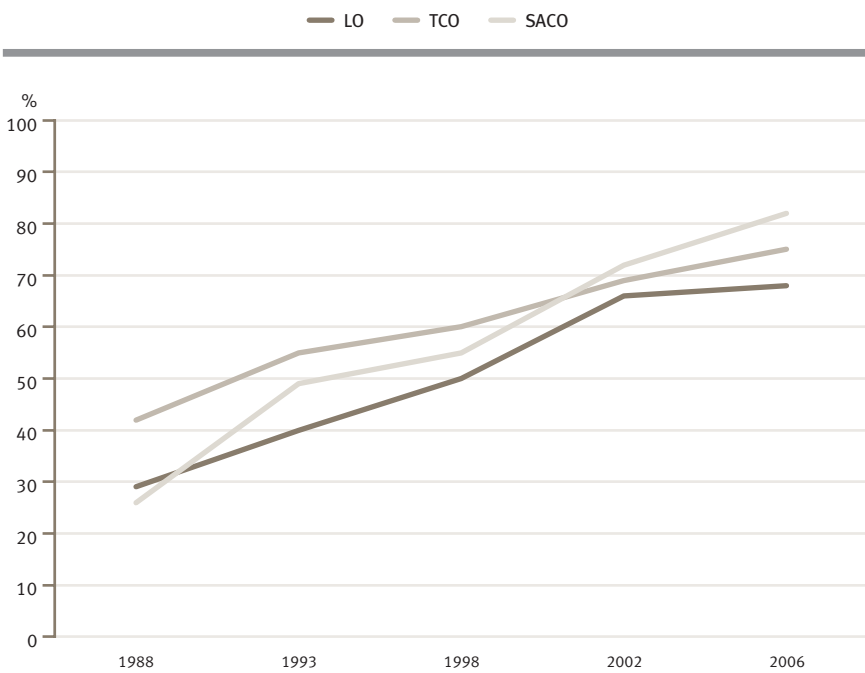
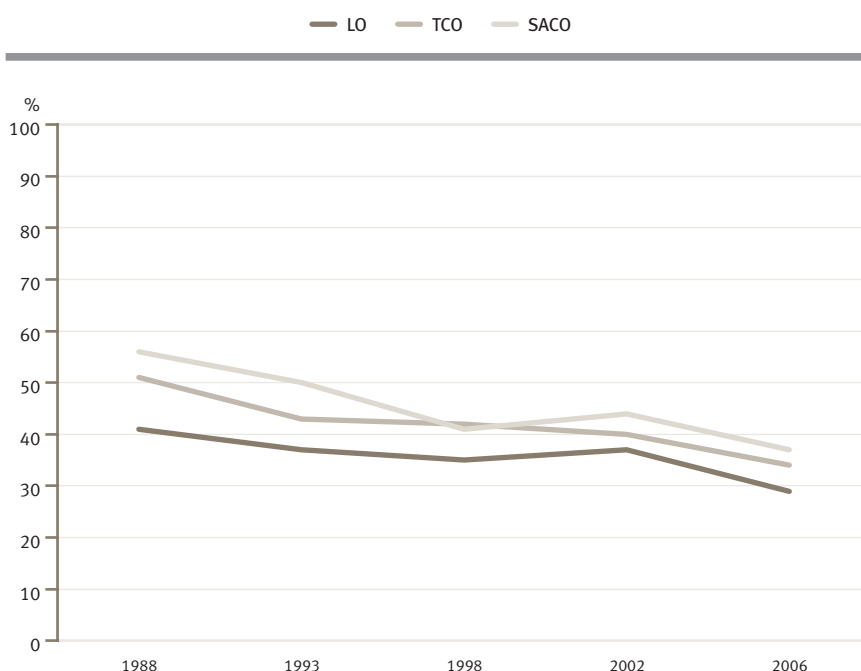


Diagram 3.3 Free medical care

Per cent



free coffee and access to gymnasium facilities during the last few years and nowadays about 70 per cent of LO, TCO and SACO members enjoy these benefits (see graph 3.1).

However benefits such as subsidized lunch or free medical care have declined to the same extent and currently only 30 per cent of both LO-members as well as TCO and SACO members have these benefits (see graph 3.3).

High-cost benefits

Only a few people have more expensive benefits like company cars and profit sharing – about 7 per cent have a free car and about 12 per cent profit sharing. Surprisingly enough, about the same number of LO-members as TCO and SACO members enjoy these benefits.

More extensive benefits

Greater benefits such as flexible working hours and staff training are the area where there is the greatest difference between LO-TCO and SACO members. Flexible working hours as well as staff training are much less frequent among LO-members.

Only one third, 33 per cent, of the LO-members have flexible working hours, compared to 63 per cent of the TCO members and 78 per cent of the SACO members. The proportion of LO members with flexible working hours has risen from 18 per cent in 1988 to 33 per cent today. The number

Diagram 3.9 More extensive benefits related to earnings per month
All employees. Per cent

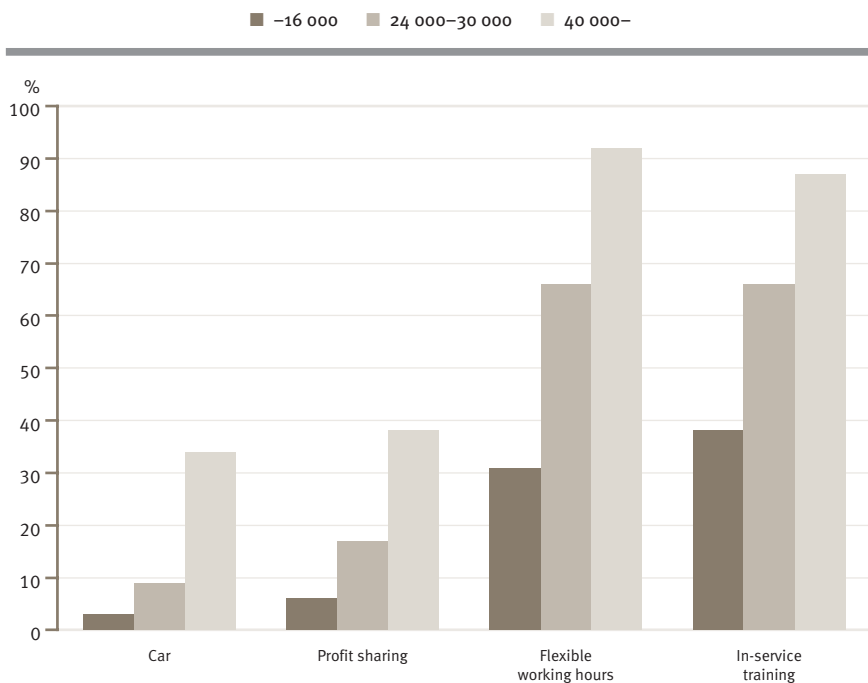


Diagram 3.8 Opportunity of in-service training
Per cent

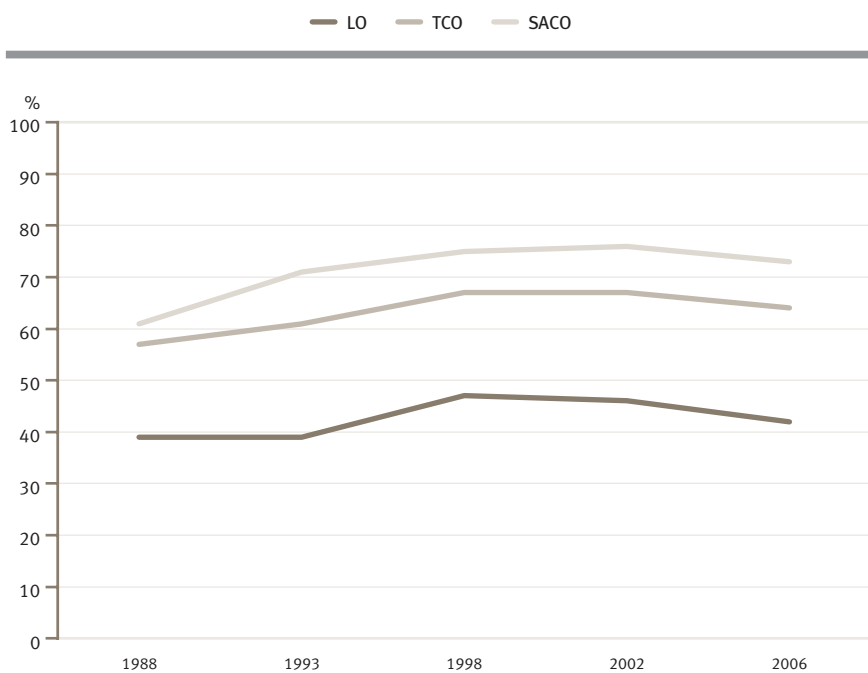
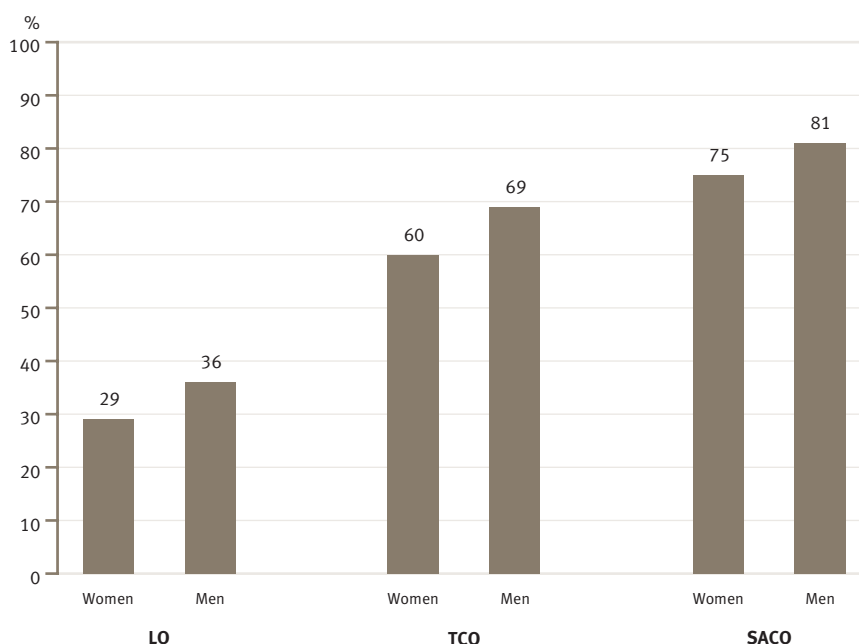


Diagram 3.11 Flexible working hours

Per cent



of white collar workers with flexible working hours has, however, increased even more. The difference is still more obvious between different wage groups, as 31 per cent of those earning up to SEK 16,000 SEK have flexible working hours compared to 92 per cent of those earning over SEK 40,000 SEK (see graph 3.9).

In-service training is also considerably less frequent for LO members and low wage earners than for TCO- and SACO members. 42 per cent of the LO members have the chance of in-service training for at least one week per year, while this possibility is open to 64 of TCO members and 73 per cent of those who belong to SACO (see graph 3.8).

Women and men – obvious class and gender ladder

Alongside class there are pronounced links between gender and the kind of benefits enjoyed at work. This is most evident when it comes to flexible working hours, where marked progression related to class and gender can be seen. At the bottom are the LO women, of whom only 29 per cent have flexible working hours. Above them come the LO men with 36 per cent, then TCO women with 60 per cent and so on to the SACO men at the top of the scale.

The class and gender ladder is also very obvious for in-service training. All the other benefits are more obviously linked to gender aspects, while class is less significant as LO-men often have each benefit as frequently as white collar workers, or at least as frequently as female white collar workers.

In general LO women are the group that have least access to different benefits at work. An obvious example of this can be found in free medical care, which is offered to a lower proportion of LO-women than to both LO men and also TCO and SACO members. Only 18 per cent of LO-women have free medical care while about 40 per cent within other groups have this benefit.

Privileges and benefits at work

The fourth report in the survey “Opinions on unions and work” is devoted to employee privileges and benefits at work. These may include everything from being able to take a five-minute break without asking for permission to being able to influence and plan your own working hours and tasks, or getting free coffee or free car.

In order to be able to improve and develop trade union activities, it is important to learn what views people have on many different issues as well as what the actual conditions look like. In order to find out, the survey “Opinions on unions and work” was carried out in 2006. The survey includes interviews with over 8,000 employees throughout the country. This is the fifth time that “Opinions on the union and work” has been conducted since 1988.